

Message Text

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13

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 OMB-01 DRC-01

SAM-01 SAB-01 /115 W

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O R 050836Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1704

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1239

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

USEUCOM /CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAEL'S GOVERNMENT CRISIS - MRS MEIR RECONSIDERS

REF: TEL AVIV 1217

1. PRESIDENT KATZIR'S BRIEF PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT LAST EVENING THAT MRS MEIR HAD AGREED TO CONTINUE HER EFFORTS TO FORM NEW GOVT UNTIL MIDNIGHT MARCH 6, COMPLETING FULL WEEK EXTENSION THAT HAD BEEN GRANTED TO HER BY PRESIDENT, CAME IN WAKE OF INTENSE EFFORTS BY LABOR LEADERS--- EXCLUDING RAFI-- TO PERSUADE MRS MEIR TO CHANGE HER MIND. IN ALMOST CONTINUOUS ROUND OF MEETINGS AT HER RESIDENCE, MINISTERS SAPIR, ALLON, CONFIDENTIAL

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GALILI, GVATI AND BAR-LEV, SEC GEN YADLIN AND

MINISTERS-TO-BE RABIN AND RABINOWITZ ASKED MRS MEIR TO FORM NEW GOVT. LABOR PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE IS SCHEDULED TO MEET MARCH 5, 11 AM, AND EXPECTED SCENARIO IS THAT THERE WILL BE ROUND OF SPEECHES CALLING ON MRS MEIR TO STAY, CONCEIVABLY FOLLOWED BY VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

2. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN POSITION OF DAYAN'S RAFI FACTION WHICH MET TWICE MARCH 4 TO ASSESS ITS POSITION. THE RESULTS OF THESE MEETINGS WERE REAFFIRMATION OF THE FOLLOWING: A) RAFI WILL ABSTAIN OR VOTE AGAINST MINORITY GOVT IN ALL INTERNAL LABOR PARTY FORUMS; B) IT WILL VOTE FOR MINORITY GOVT IN KNESSET VOTE OF CONFIDENCE; AND C) NEITHER DAYAN NOR PERES WILL SERVE IN MINORITY GOVT. PERES REPEATED ON RADIO INTERVIEW MARCH 5 THAT RAFI HAS NO INTENTION TO SPLIT FROM LABOR PARTY EITHER TO FORM SEPARATE PARTY OR TO JOIN LIKUD.

3. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN NO CHANGE IN POSITION OF NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY, WHICH CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO SERVE IN NEW CABINET.

4. LIKUD LEADERSHIP CALLED ON PRESIDENT KATZIR MARCH 4 AFTER MRS MEIR HAD AFFIRMED HER INTENTION TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO FORM NEW CABINET FOR TWO MORE DAYS. LIKUD LEADER MENAHEM BEGIN TOLD REPORTERS AFTERWARDS THAT PRESIDENT KATZIR AGREED WITH ASSESSMENT THAT NATION REQUIRED NATIONAL UNITY GOVT. BEGIN ALSO SAID THAT MAJORITY OF KNESSET (LIKUD, NRP AND 12 LABOR PARTY MEMBERS) NOW FAVOR NATIONAL UNITY GOVT, ADDING THAT LIKUD WOULD WELCOME SUCH A GOVT LED BY MRS MEIR.

5. THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE POSSIBILITIES AS TO WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT: A) MRS MEIR WILL ASK PRESIDENT KATZIR, OR BE GIVEN BY HIM WITHOUT ASKING FOR IT, FURTHER TIME BEYOND WEDNESDAY TO FORM NEW GOVT: B) SHE WILL AGREE TO HEAD MINORITY GOVT ALONG LINES OF THAT WHICH SHE HAD ALREADY ORGANIZED-- WITHOUT DAYAN OR PERES: C) SHE WILL TURN BACK HER MANDATE AS SHE SAID MARCH 4 SHE WOULD. LAST OF THESE POSSIBILITIES WOULD LEAD TO SCENARIO DESCRIBED REFTEL, EITHER NEW ELECTION WITH CURRENT GOVT CONTINUING IN OFFICE OR FORMATION OF NATIONAL UNITY GOVT.

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6. AS LONG AS RAFI FACTION AND NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY STICK BY THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS, MRS MEIR CONTINUES TO FACE THE SAME BASIC PROBLEMS WHICH SHE CONFRONTED TWO DAYS AGO.

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